

Vietnam

U.S. Intelligence Was Surprised By Enemy's Drive, Aides Assert

By BENJAMIN WELLES

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 10—

Evidence has begun to emerge here that United States intelligence was caught by surprise by the direction, timing and power of the North Vietnamese offensive in South Vietnam.

The National Security Council's Intelligence Committee, headed by Henry A. Kissinger, President Nixon's national security adviser, reportedly concluded that the main enemy thrust would come from west to east against Kontum in the Central Highlands and not, as happened, from north to south

across the demilitarized zone to Quangtri.

Some senior intelligence analysts here insist that there has been no "intelligence failure" during the five-week offensive in Vietnam. They add that the enemy build-up had been observed and meticulously reported since it began early in the year.

"We've kept the policy-makers fully informed" said one source, who asked not to be identified. "There's been no disagreement about the enemy capability. We saw the build-up—though we couldn't tell just

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when or where he'd strike. What our policy-makers or the South Vietnamese did with our reports is out of our hands."

Nonetheless, there are other veteran United States intelligence officials who concede that the North Vietnamese gained a major tactical surprise—and four or five days of virtually unimpeded advance, which led to the seizure of Quangtri—by hitting where and when it was least expected.

"The intelligence people did not anticipate that the North Vietnamese would take the short route,"—one such source said. "The surprise was that for the first time in 18 years the Communists stopped the pretense of 'infiltration' and went down the coastal Highway 1. Frankly we were surprised that the claim of a 'people's' civil war was destroyed."

In addition, intelligence sources here acknowledge that they have been surprised by the vast quantities of bulky and often complex weapons moved as much as 600 to 700 miles south by trucks, river boats and even on bicycles pushed or ridden over jungle trails.

"We knew an offensive was coming," said one intelligence analyst, "but we didn't know the quantity, and the types of their supplies, the distribution into future battle areas, and especially the amount of their ammunition. They dropped more than 2,000 artillery rounds into Anloc a few days ago."

Some officials here concede that the United States, despite its array of electronic technology, infrared photography, acoustical "sensors" and aerial-surveillance techniques, appears to have been outwitted by the North Vietnamese.

"We've been listening in on their radio communications for years—and they know it," said one informant. "They're getting more sophisticated. They're beginning to use counter-measures."

The United States aerial flights that used infrared devices to pick up heat arising from large masses moving at night and the electronic "sensors" scattered by the thousands by United States aircraft over the Ho Chi Minh trail retrack are "imperfect,"

sources here say.

"We know when something's going along the trail," said one source, "but we don't always know whether it's a truck—or a tank."

The appearance of about 30 North Vietnamese tanks—half of them 40-ton T-54's and the rest 15-ton amphibious PT-76's around Tayninh and Anloc surprised both the United States and South Vietnamese.

Whether they were disassembled and brought south by truck or river boat, or whether they were driven at night and camouflaged by day to avoid United States air attacks, is still unclear. But each trip must have taken two to three months, in the view of specialists here.

The steady reduction in United States ground combat in recent months and the cut-back—until the current offensive—of much American aerial surveillance are cited as reasons why the North managed to achieve these surprises.

"We've cut way back on our SLAR," an informant said, referring to Sideways-Looking Airborne Radar flights. "Even radar isn't much help when you're trying to peer through two or three canopies of jungle or through camouflage strung for miles over trails."

1969 ADVICE TO NIXON

CIA Doubtful on Port Mining

By MORTON KONDRACKÉ
and THOMAS B. ROSS

Chicago Sun-Times Service

President Nixon was advised by the Central Intelligence Agency in 1969 that the type of action he now has ordered to cut off supplies to North Vietnam would not work.

"Within two or three months," the CIA declared in a secret memo, "North Vietnam and its allies would be able to implement alternative procedures for maintaining the flow of essential economic and military imports."

The State Department and the Defense Department were less pessimistic. But both conceded that the effort to prevent resupply through alternative land routes from China would involve much heavier bombing and a much higher risk of civilian casualties.

The estimates of the three agencies are contained in National Security Memorandum 1 (NSSM-1), a secret study of the war compiled by the President's national security adviser Henry A. Kissinger.

Gravel Reads Memo

This section of the memo was read into the Congressional Record on the Senate floor yesterday by Sen. Mike Gravel, D-Alaska, although two weeks ago he had been blocked by Republicans from doing so. Copies of the memo also have been obtained and their contents reported by some newspapers recently.

Asked about the CIA's gloomy forecast at a press conference yesterday, Kissinger said it had been "carefully considered" but that Nixon also had before him recent and "much more detailed studies," which he implied were more optimistic.

In the 1969 study, Kissinger asked: "What are current views on proportion of war-essential imports that could come into NVN (North Vietnam) over the rail or road lines from China, even if all imports by sea were denied and strong effort even made to interdict ground transport?"

The CIA replied: "All the war-essential imports could be brought into North Vietnam over rail lines or roads from China in the event that imports by sea were successfully denied...."

Pessimistic View

"Almost four years of air war in North Vietnam have shown — as did the Korean war — that, although air strikes will destroy transport facilities, equipment and supplies, they cannot successfully interdict the flow of supplies because much of the damage can frequently be repaired within hours...."

"An intensive and sustained air interdiction program could have a good chance of reducing the northern rail capacity by at least half. However, roads are less vulnerable to interdiction, and waterways even less so...."

"In addition to the overland capacity, an airlift from Chinese airfields could potentially provide a means for importing a large volume of high-priority goods. Moreover, total interdiction of seaborne imports would be difficult because shallow-draft lighters could be used to unload cargo from oceangoing ships anchored in waters outside the mined major harbor areas."

The State Department commented: "we do not believe that the capacity of the DRV-PRC (North Vietnam-China) road and rail network is great enough to permit an adequate flow of supplies in the face of an intense day and night bombing campaign...."

"On the other hand, one important point should be kept in mind. The North Vietnamese surprised many observers, and confounded many predictions, by holding together and simultaneously sending ever-increasing amounts of supplies and personnel into the South during 3½ years of bombing...."

"With this experience in mind, there is little reason to believe that new bombing will

accomplish what previous bombing failed to do, unless it is conducted with much greater intensity and readiness to defy criticism and risk of escalation."

The Defense Department declared: "An interdiction campaign... when employed in conjunction with denial of sea imports, would, in large part, isolate Hanoi and Haiphong from each other and from the rest of the country."

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The Washington Merry-Go-Round

THE WASHINGTON POST Wednesday, May 31, 1972 B 15

Bombing Said to Bolster Hanoi Effort

By Jack Anderson

The latest secret intelligence reports suggest strongly that the bombing of North Vietnam is bolstering rather than weakening the Communist war effort.

There's no doubt that the devastating U.S. firepower has destroyed military supplies and crippled production. But the intelligence reports say that the North Vietnamese economy was already breaking down. Now Hanoi can blame it all on the bombing and exhort the people to put up with hardships in the name of patriotism.

Even before President Nixon renewed the bombing, the intelligence reports claim, North Vietnam was badly faltering. The economy had been strained by war and battered by floods.

This had caused a virtual breakdown of the distribution system. Farmers were hoarding their harvests instead of delivering them to the market. Only the black market was bustling. Smugglers and speculators were doing a brisk business behind the backs of the commissars.

Last year's floods were said to be the worst in 25 years. One CIA cable quoting a reliable source, reported that "probably at least 80 per cent of the country's rice-growing areas had been damaged in varying degrees..."

"Livestock losses were par-

ticularly serious, primarily because of the loss of draft animals ... Hanoi had been saved only because the dikes had been purposely breached to channel the flood waters into the districts north of the city."

On top of war losses, this was more than the harassed North Vietnamese economy could stand. One intelligence estimate suggests that Hanoi launched the recent offensive, in part, to divert the people's attention from their economic woes. In a sense, the U.S. naval and air bombardment was almost welcome as an excuse to explain the staggering shortages and to overcome internal discontent.

There's no doubt, too, that the mining of Haiphong harbor and the bombing of the rail lines has disrupted the flow of military supplies. But this has also forced the two Communist rivals, Russia and China, to work together for the first time in 10 years to help their North Vietnamese ally.

Intelligence reports claim that the Chinese have agreed to permit a massive increase in Soviet rail shipments across China. The first shipments, which would have been loaded onto ships at Vladivostok, have already been diverted overland.

China and North Vietnam are linked by a network of rail lines, roads and trails which our own military experts ac-

knowledge cannot be cut off by bombing.

Because of the bombing, Hanoi has also brought pressure upon Moscow and Peking to increase their shipments. There's a good possibility, despite the bombing, that the North Vietnamese will wind up with all the military supplies they'll need.

Greek's Predictions

Our own private pollster, Las Vegas oddsmaker Jimmy the Greek Snyder, predicts next Tuesday's crucial California primary race will end in a "dead heat" between Democrats George McGovern and Hubert Humphrey.

Every other major canvasser has picked McGovern to win by a comfortable margin.

The Greek, however, thinks Humphrey will be saved by what is known as "Proposition 9" on the California ballot.

This is an environmental proposal which, among other things, would shut down corporate polluters, restrict offshore oil drilling, initiate a five-year moratorium on construction of nuclear power plants, and restrict pesticides.

Jimmy believes California's huge block of undecided voters will be lured to the polls by their opposition to "Prop. 9." His surveys show most of these voters will pull the lever over the Humphrey column.

A large number of the silent "undecideds," Jimmy reckons, are people who work in industries that would be restricted.

They should go for Humphrey, the labor-backed candidate.

But a lot can happen between now and the June 6 primary day, the Greek warned us. The three-part Humphrey-McGovern debates, in particular, could affect the outcome.

McGovern has the most money and a better organization, Jimmy conceded. But on the negative side, McGovern hurt himself with California's huge defense industry when he voted against a federal loan for Lockheed Aircraft.

Humphrey, possibly looking to the California race, quietly cast the deciding vote in favor of Lockheed.

It all adds up, says the nation's premier oddsmaker, to a neck-and-neck race.

Note: The Greek called two other primaries for us right on the nose, picking Wallace to take the Democratic prize in Florida and Humphrey to edge McGovern in the close Ohio primary.

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Vietnam

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

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Hanoi Signals Viewed Not Serious

By Jack Anderson

We have had access to classified documents which shed new light on the controversy over whether President Nixon "missed" an opportunity to end the Vietnam War in 1969.

The North Vietnamese sent out several signals after the 1968 election that they were willing to make peace with the new Nixon administration. These ranged from guarded messages to military pull-backs.

The messages, some more vague than others, reached Washington through a variety of channels. But more impressive was the withdrawal of 22 of 25 regiments from the two northernmost provinces of South Vietnam.

The key to the controversy lies in the interpretation of these moves. The new President chose not to regard the messages as serious peace overtures. He also interpreted the withdrawal of the 22 regiments as a military redeployment rather than a political signal.

The minutes of a secret White House meeting on Oct. 28, 1969, summarize the Nixon attitude. Speaking for the President, Henry Kissinger declared:

"We have mentioned 'cease-fire' (to Hanoi) in various connotations. If they want a reasonable compromise, we will meet them half-way. If they insist on American humiliation, we will resist."

He held out hope the North Vietnamese, despite louder growlings from Hanoi, would come to terms. "The Hanoi tactics are the use of unbridled ferocity," Kissinger said, "until just before they are ready to settle."

He outlined a two-track strategy for peace. "The rapid road would be negotiation," he said, "the slow road Vietnamization."

Slow Road

President Nixon has traveled the slow road. His intelligence estimates warned that a Communist takeover in South Vietnam was inevitable. His Vietnamization policy, therefore, was aimed at delaying it, not avoiding it.

The President was determined to hold off the day the Communists took power in Saigon, we must conclude, for his own political reasons. He simply didn't want the Communists in control of the south while he was running for reelection in 1972.

He had reason to regard Communist control more as a political problem for himself than a serious menace to the U.S. For at the time of his inauguration, the National Intelligence Estimate was cautiously optimistic about the effects of a Communist takeover.

There would be damage, according to the estimate, to U.S. prestige and credibility among other Southeast Asian

nations. But the document stressed:

"While some Southeast Asian leaders would probably entertain doubts about the will of the U.S. to play a security role in the area, we do not believe that they would be panicked into precipitate changes in policy or posture."

Instead, the document predicted these leaders would take a wait-and-see stance.

The estimate also offered a virtual point-by-point rebuttal of the so-called "domino theory" which the Johnson administration had so often used as its rationalization for continuing the war.

The document declared, for example, that Hanoi no doubt hopes to extend its control over Laos and Cambodia but would probably bide its time.

"They might fear some risk of a new U.S. military response," it was suggested. "Moreover, Hanoi would be preoccupied for a time at least with the formidable task of consolidating Communist rule in South Vietnam."

The estimate gave this forecast about relations between Hanoi and Peking in the event of a Communist triumph in the south:

"It is possible . . . that the two countries would draw closer together . . . It seems more likely, however, that Hanoi would wish to take the opportunity to establish quite clearly its independence of the Chinese, relying on continued

Soviet and available Free World" assistance.

The document said Peking could be expected to beat the propaganda drums over the expansion of Communist control. But it added significantly: "Current Chinese strategy does not appear to call for overt aggression, and we do not foresee a change in this strategy."

As for Moscow, the document predicted: "The Soviet Union is not likely to become a major supporter of Communist subversion in Southeast Asia after Vietnam."

The CIA's Office of National Estimates concurred in 1969 that if Saigon fell, "North Vietnam would consume itself in Laos and South Vietnam. Only Laos would definitely follow into the Communist orbit."

This would leave Southeast Asia, in the CIA's opinion, "just as it is at least for another generation."

Whatever the intelligence assessment, however, President Nixon's political assessment was that he couldn't afford to lose South Vietnam to the Communists before the 1972 election.

Perhaps he is right that the "rapid road" to peace, via negotiation, was illusory. But the "slow road," which he elected to take, has cost more than 15,000 American lives since he took office.

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Vietnam

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'The Human Cost of Communism'

'If the North takes over the South, what will the bloodbath be?'

By ROBERT THOMPSON

LONDON—The present invasion of South Vietnam and the intense fighting of the last few weeks draw attention once again to the human suffering caused, on an almost unprecedented scale, to the Vietnamese people by the continuing war. I am not here considering the battle casualties which, although on each side they have probably reached 500,000, can at least be regarded as "legitimate" in war.

Nor am I considering the refugees who, although their plight may be tragic, are at least still alive.

What should most concern us is the number of civilians who have been killed in both halves of Vietnam, and those who may yet die in the future, as part of the human cost of Communism.

The Western conscience is immediately pricked by an American-committed atrocity, such as Mylai, and by the civilian casualties caused by the bombing of the North (although such casualties are now likely to be far less than during 1965-68 because of the development of the extremely accurate "smart" bomb).

Little or no attention, however, and certainly no equivalent reporting, has been given to similar Vietcong or North Vietnamese atrocities which have occurred on a scale that makes Mylai almost insignificant. These have not occurred because of some aberration, accident or inaccuracy of bomb-

ing. They have occurred, both selectively and indiscriminately, as a matter of deliberate policy.

At the time Hanoi complained of six civilian casualties, as a result of the first American raid on the North after the invasion began, she was firing 122-mm. rockets indiscriminately into Saigon and Phnompenh, killing more than ten times that number.

Her Russian 130-mm. guns have pounded Anloc and Quangtri to rubble. They will do the same to Kontum and Hue if they get within range without any consideration whatsoever for the civilian population.

Everyone has heard of Mylai, but who has heard of Caibe where the Vietcong, after its capture, lingered only to murder the wives and children of all the local militia? Or of the Montagnard village of Dakson, where they moved from hut to hut with flame-throwers incinerating more than 250 villagers, two-thirds of them women and children?

Most people have heard of the massacres at Hue in 1968 where the Vietcong and North Vietnamese, after its capture, executed 5,700 people (as assessed from the mass graves found afterwards) but who knows that in captured documents they gloated over these figures and only complained that they had not killed enough? These were not aberrations, nor savagery for savagery's sake, nor the work of undisciplined soldiers acting in violation of

instructions, but part of a ruthless deliberate policy designed to break a people who would not otherwise bend to their will.

The world cannot plead ignorance because it has all been well documented. The evidence has been authoritatively put together in a compendium prepared, surprisingly, for the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary (the meat was obviously too red for Senator Fulbright and the Foreign Affairs Committee).

There are distressing implications for the future. If the invasion succeeds and the North takes over the South, what will the bloodbath be? Four years ago I estimated that it would be several hundred thousands.

I now wish to amend that figure to well over one million (out of eighteen million people).

The critics of the war may claim that the forecasts are exaggerated. But Colonel Tran Van Duc, a North Vietnamese officer who defected after twenty-four years in the Communist party, stated that the Communists, if they win, would slaughter up to three million South Vietnamese, and another colonel, Le Xuan Chuyen, who defected after twenty-one years, stated that five million people in South Vietnam were on the Communist "blood debt" list and that 10-15 per cent of these would pay with their lives. When asked in an interview if the possibility of a bloodbath had been exaggerated he replied: "It could not be exaggerated. It will happen."

Sir Robert Thompson is the British expert on guerrilla warfare who has undertaken secret missions for President Nixon to report on events in Vietnam.

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Cornell Author Disputes N. Vietnamese Bloodbath

By George C. Wilson
Washington Post Staff Writer

A charge by President Nixon and others that the North Vietnamese murdered up to 800,000 of their own people when they took over the country in the 1950s is a "myth," according to a study circulated yesterday by Cornell University.

The charges are dispatched in a 59-page essay by D. Gareth Porter, a 30-year-old research associate at Cornell's international relations of East Asia project. Cornell's project office, in sending out the report, said it deserves "immediate, widespread public attention" because of Mr. Nixon's frequent references to the alleged bloodbath in North Vietnam.

"This bloodbath myth is the result of a deliberate propaganda campaign by the South Vietnamese and U.S. governments to discredit" North Vietnam, Porter says in summarizing the paper he researched in South Vietnam and at Cornell. Porter has been a critic of the Vietnam war.

The prime source for President Nixon, author Bernard Fall and others in describing the alleged massacre during the North Vietnamese land reform from 1953 to 1956 is a book guilty of "gross misquotation" and "fraudulent documentation," Porter alleges.

The book Porter cites is entitled, "From Colonialism to Communism," by Hoang Van Chi. Chi's book—published in 1964—was financed and promoted by such U.S. agencies

as the Central Intelligence Agency, according to Porter.

Chi, now a course chairman in Southeast Asia orientation at the State Department's Washington Training Center, was at Ft. Bragg, N.C., lecturing and could not be reached for comment yesterday.

The National Security Council cited Chi's book as one of

President Nixon's sources for declaring on April 16, 1971, "I think of a half a million, by conservative estimates," in North Vietnam who were murdered or otherwise exterminated by the North Vietnamese after they took over from the South.

The President added at that same news conference that "if the United States were to fail in Vietnam, if the Communists were to take over, the bloodbath that would follow would be a blot on this nation's history from which we would find it very difficult to return."

Asked by Porter to document the President's "half a million" figure, the National Security Council quoted Chi as writing the following: "The guilt complex which haunted the peasants' minds after the massacre of about 5 per cent of the total population..." The National Security Council added on its own that "5 per cent of the total population of North Vietnam at that time would be about 700,000."

"Mr. Chi offers no justification for this allegation" that 5 per cent of the North Vietnamese population was murdered, asserts Porter, "but he suggests at one point that most of the deaths were those of children who starved 'owing to the isolation policy.'"

Charges Porter: "This is yet another of the many wholly unsubstantiated charges put forth by Mr. Chi, for there was no such policy of isolating families, even of those landlords sentenced for serious crimes during the land reform."

"Yet, it is mainly on the basis of Mr. Chi's totally unreliable account, the intention of which was plainly not historical accuracy but propaganda against" North Vietnam, says Porter, "that the President of the United States himself has told the American people that 'a half a million' people were exterminated."

In contrast to CIA's description of Chi as a "former Vietminh cadre" who could thus be expected to have firsthand knowledge of the land reform program, Porter asserts that Chi was never a party member before leaving the North for South Vietnam in 1955.

"Mr. Chi was himself a rela-

tively wealthy landowner," Porter claims on the basis of an interview with Chi. Thus, he argues, Chi could not be expected to give an unbiased account of the land reform program.

Western authors like Fall, says Porter, suffered a "critical" shortcoming because they could not read Vietnamese and thus could not research the original documents the North Vietnamese used to communicate with their own cadre. Fall and others, therefore, had to rely on Saigon and U.S. government summaries of the North Vietnamese material or on authors like Chi. (Porter reads Vietnamese and said in an interview that this enabled him to study documents that went to North Vietnamese cadre from party leaders.)

In an attempt to show the danger relying on summaries and other secondary sources, Porter charges Chi distorted a North Vietnamese party (Lao-dong Party) slogan by saying it included the phrase, "liquidate the landlords." There was no such phrase, Porter asserts. Instead, he alleges, the slogan said: "Abolish the feudal regime of land ownership in a manner that is discriminating, methodical and under sound leadership."

He charges Chi also mistranslated Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap's speech of Oct. 29, 1956, on land reform. Giap, according to the Chi's translation, said the party "executed too many honest people" and came to regard torture as normal practice.

Comparing the Vietnamese original text of Giap's speech with the Chi and Porter translations (which Porter said other scholars and Vietnamese corroborated), Porter alleges that "Mr. Chi's translation is one of his most flagrant abuses of documentary evidence."

Donald Brewster is the National Security Council staffer (on loan there from AID) who discussed the source of Mr. Nixon's bloodbath figures with Porter. Brewster told The Washington Post yesterday that real and literal meanings of Communist statements are sometimes two different things.

Brewster added that the sources he cited for Porter "are not the totality" of the material the White House relied upon. Also, said Brewster, it is the trend that is most important, not specific figures. In that sense, he said, the trend of Communist actions, such as North Vietnamese assassinations in Hue, shows fears of a bloodbath in South Vietnam are indeed well founded, just as President Nixon has stated.

Porter himself said in an interview that he has filed for conscientious objector status and would decline to serve in the military in the Vietnam war. He is on a year-long fellowship, \$5,000 for the academic year, in pursuit of his doctorate at Cornell's East Asia research center.



D. GARETH PORTER
... New Vietnam study